
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1248

Brief Description: Redirecting certain moneys for the benefit of department of fish and wildlife programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, B. Sullivan, Blake, VanDeWege and Ericksen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Redirects revenue collected by the Department of Fish and Wildlife from the sale of annual resident saltwater licenses and all annual razor clam and shellfish licenses from the General Fund into the Wildlife Account.
- Establishes in statute that \$2 of each license sold to an individual intending to fish for salmon, steelhead, marine fish, or sturgeon must be deposited into the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Account.

Hearing Date: 1/22/07

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Disposition of revenue generated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife

The State Wildlife Account receives various revenues collected by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department). These revenues include, among many items, the sales of many Department issued licenses and tags, administrative penalties, compensation for damages, advertisement sales, and a game fish excise tax [RCW 77.12.170 & .184]. Monies in the Wildlife Account are used to primarily to support Department activities.

Not all revenue generated by the Department is deposited into the Wildlife Account. Sources of Department-generated revenue that do not go into the Wildlife Account include revenue that is

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generated from the sale of annual resident saltwater licenses and all annual razor clam and shellfish licenses. Revenue from the sale of these licenses is dedicated to the General Fund.

Revenue from recreational license fees that is deposited into the General Fund is required to be appropriated for the management, enhancement, research, and enforcement of the Department's programs that manage saltwater resources [RCW 77.32.510].

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Account

The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG) Account is an unappropriated account managed by the Department. Funds in the RFEG Account may only be used for projects sponsored by an RFEG.

An RFEG is a local, incorporated, non-profit organization relying primarily on volunteer efforts to enhance salmon resources and develop projects designed to aid the fishery enhancement capability of the Department [RCW 77.95.060 & 070]. Fourteen such groups have been formed and recognized by the Department [WAC 220-140-020].

The RFEG Account receives certain dedicated funding. The dedicated funding includes a \$100 surcharge on the sale of salmon licenses and all revenue from the sale of carcasses and eggs recovered from salmon that return to a hatchery run by an RFEG. In addition, the RFEG Account receives a portion of each recreational fishing license fee [RCW 77.95.090].

The actual amount of each license fee dedicated to the RFEG Account is not provided in statute and is left to the discretion of the Department. However, the Department must ensure that the portion of the license fee dedicated to the RFEG Account is set at a level that equals the level of participation in the fisheries benefitted from the enhancement programs [RCW 77.32.440 & WAC 220-140-050].

Summary of Bill:

Changes to the Wildlife Account

Revenue collected by the Department from the sale of annual resident saltwater licenses and all annual razor clam and shellfish licenses is redirected from the General Fund into the Wildlife Account.

The provision requiring recreational license fees to be used for the Department's saltwater resource management programs is repealed. Instead, revenue from these sources redirected from the General Fund and deposited into the Wildlife Account may be used for any of the purposes authorized for Wildlife Account monies.

Changes to the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Account

The Department's discretion to set the portion of a recreational fishing license fee directed to the RFEG Account is removed. Instead, the portion of the fee dedicated to the RFEG Account is established to be \$2 for each license sold to an individual intending to fish for salmon, steelhead, marine fish, or sturgeon.

The Department must rely on annual surveys to determine the percentage of recreational fishing license buyers who intend to fish for salmon, steelhead, marine fish, or sturgeon. The results of

the survey must be used to determine how many of the total recreational fishing licenses sold qualify for the \$2 transfer into the RFEG Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.